United Nations A/C.2/55/SR.11

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
20 March 2001
English
Original: Spanish

Second Committee

Summary record of the 11th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 10 October 2000, at 4 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Niculescu ..... (Romania)
later: Ms. Barrington (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Ireland)

Contents

Agenda item 96: Operational activities for development (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

00-68169 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 5.05 p.m.

Agenda item 96: Operational activities for development (*continued*) (A/55/271)

1. **The Chairman** informed the members of the Committee of the results of consultations held with the Trade and Development Board with regard to the possible convening at Geneva, on 16 October, of a joint meeting during the Board's high-level session. Although reaction had been positive, the parties had not been able to come to a final agreement. Should such an opportunity present itself in the future, it would be advisable to begin consultations far enough in advance to be able to agree on the membership of delegations, dates and the most appropriate arrangements for a meeting of that type, and he would so advise the secretariat of the Trade and Development Board through its representative in New York.

2. *Ms. Barrington (Ireland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

3. **Mr. Holubov** (Ukraine) commended the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) for its work aimed at empowering women by increasing their involvement in economic activity, promoting governance and leadership, protecting their human rights and eliminating all forms of violence against them and stressed the importance of continued exploration of innovative approaches for the advancement of women which took into account national and regional priorities. In that regard, he underlined the importance of further efforts to deal with the AIDS pandemic through active collaboration with other relevant agencies of the United Nations system, national and international non-governmental organizations and bilateral donors. UNIFEM was a key actor in the promotion of gender mainstreaming in the activities of the United Nations system, and it should continue such efforts and take advantage of the lessons learned at the country level thanks to the resident coordinator system, the common country assessments and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

4. Operational activities for development continued to play an important role in providing assistance in various sectors, in accordance with the needs and priorities of the recipient countries. United Nations funds and programmes were important vehicles for development cooperation and, by stressing the eradication of poverty, which was the greatest threat to peace and security, such activities contributed greatly to ensuring a lasting peace and the prosperity of all nations. The United Nations was singularly well placed in that regard and had a unique mandate to address the issues of peace and development in an integrated manner. Accordingly, it had an important role to play in coordinating the development efforts of all actors involved, including the Bretton Woods institutions, bilateral donors, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. The main "operational arm" of the system, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), had made a considerable effort to translate the international community's most recent objectives into meaningful results and to improve its performance in the field with a view to meeting those objectives.

5. He welcomed the reforms aimed at strengthening the resident coordinator system, developing UNDAF and finding new financing modalities. UNDAF was an effective mechanism for coordinating and streamlining the activities of funds and programmes at the country and regional level. The recent efforts of the Administrator of UNDP to link reforms, results and resources could lead to an improvement of the situation with regard to funding and to greater effectiveness for UNDP activities, in particular at the field level. In that context he noted the results of the recent ministerial meeting held in New York, on the Administrator's initiative, which had shown the continuing support of Member States, in particular the recipient countries, for UNDP and the overall operational activities system. It was to be hoped that the results of that meeting would be translated into tangible progress towards providing UNDP with sound and predictable funding.

6. Almost all United Nations funds and programmes were currently actively involved in the implementation of the internationally agreed objectives set out at major conferences and summits, in particular in the areas of post-conflict rehabilitation, resolution of problems relating to globalization and other global challenges. Special attention should also be given to the development of Africa and the fight against HIV/AIDS. UNDP must continue to play a central role in the United Nations development system by coordinating the activities of other funds and programmes and facilitating the development efforts of the donor community. In spite of numerous decisions adopted by the General Assembly, resources for operational

activities during the last decade had decreased significantly, a trend which, if it continued, would seriously compromise the United Nations ability to deliver essential services. Yet, the stimulating effect of United Nations technical cooperation was far greater than the actual financial resources allocated for that purpose. For example, every dollar allocated to Ukraine by UNDP from its core resources brought four additional dollars from other sources. The new mechanisms adopted by the Executive Board and implemented by the Administrator would improve UNDP's capacity to respond to the needs of recipient countries, provided that the necessary resources were available.

7. The next year, his country would become the largest recipient of UNDP development assistance in the region. Having been strengthened as a result of the recent establishment in Ukraine of the United Nations House, the United Nations funds and programmes had provided valuable assistance to his Government in implementing a wide range of economic and social reforms, minimizing the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe and solving other problems of the transitional period. Over the past few years, UNDP activities had become more visible. The country office had established partner relations with ministries, agencies and non-governmental organizations, and had mobilized additional financing, including from domestic companies. Moreover, it planned to streamline its activities, introduce a programme approach, involve non-traditional donors and strengthen its cooperation with the remote regions of the country. The UNDP office, in close cooperation with his Government, was finalizing the Second Country Cooperation Framework for 2001-2003, which would set the priorities and directions of its programme activities. The United Nations-Chernobyl programme had been launched recently aimed at eliminating the medical, environmental and social consequences of that major technological accident. His delegation also attached great significance to the Crimea Integration and Development Programme, which had been set up in 1995 at the request of the Government, to facilitate the process of resettlement of the formerly deported peoples, including the Tartars. The lessons learned would serve as an example for similar projects in other regions of the world.

8. **Mr. Tiwari** (India), expressing support for the statement made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, welcomed the fact that the Millennium Declaration had reaffirmed the decision to make the United Nations a more effective instrument for pursuing the priorities identified in the Declaration, particularly the fight for development of all the peoples of the world. A commitment had also been expressed to make the right to development a reality for everyone. Those were commendable decisions that would lay to rest any doubts that might linger as to the development mandate of the United Nations, following the temptations observed in recent years to retreat from multilateralism and slow down multilateral development cooperation. There were many who continued to believe that market forces could take care of all problems and that private financial flows should increasingly replace official development assistance (ODA). The most recent studies of trends of growth and development in most of the developing countries indicated that the expected trickle-down effect to alleviate poverty had not occurred. Regional disparities and disparities within countries had widened. Poverty diminished slowly with growth, but inequalities expanded.

9. The continuing decline in funding posed a threat to the viability of operational activities of the United Nations system and severely constrained its continuing ability to work for targeted development at the country levels. At the recent Ministerial Meeting of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), it had been rightly emphasized that without sustained development, other objectives of the United Nations would be jeopardized. The lack of resources and the possibility that they might be diverted to other high-profile activities such as peacekeeping operations, were a cause of deep concern, since peace and stability often became casualties only when development efforts failed and poverty and unemployment became endemic.

10. The situation could only be remedied through individual and joint actions of the entire international community in favour of development. The urgency of that requirement had increased as a result of the inequalities created in the era of globalization. India, within its constraints, was contributing substantially to increasing the core resources of the United Nations funds and programmes and to financing the operational activities of the system. To mention but one example, India was the seventeenth biggest contributor to UNDP and was the largest from amongst the developing

countries. He urged all partners to enhance their contributions to the core resources of operational entities of the United Nations system and commended countries such as Norway, which were already doing so. While the importance of bilateral programmes for development should not be minimized, the goal of global prosperity stated in the Millennium Declaration could only be achieved through multilateral help under the leadership of the United Nations and its agencies.

11. As far as the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) were concerned, India attached the highest importance to gender empowerment, which the Government had already included in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for India. A two-pronged strategy for the empowerment of women had been adopted to mainstream gender in all policies and programmes across sectors and to make women-specific interventions wherever required. The outcome had been a rapid decline in the still high rates of illiteracy among women. Organizing women's collectives and self-help groups had helped to improve their economic situation and microcredit institutions had proven to be successful.

12. As a result of constitutional amendments in India, nearly 700,000 women now occupied positions as elected chairpersons or members of village, town, and city level democratic institutions. The web of ministries and departments for the advancement of women both at the central and state government levels had been enhanced through the creation of the Parliamentary Committee on the Empowerment of Women, special funds for funding various programmes for women's welfare, a National Centre for Gender Training and Research, a revitalized Committee on Gender Mainstreaming and an accelerated programme of pensions for widows and disabled women. Civilization could not advance without the honour, dignity and contribution of women being the focal epicentre.

13. **Ms. Leonce-Carryl** (Saint Lucia), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), expressed support for the statement made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Charter of the United Nations mandated a central role for the Organization in development. That role should be strengthened, particularly in the context of globalization.

14. The records showed that poverty persisted and was increasing in developing countries, that economic growth was stagnating or declining in those countries and that, in the context of globalization and trade liberalization, most developing countries were either marginalized, left out of the global economy or were adversely affected. Naturally, conflicts were also increasing as needs increased and the disparities and inequities in the global economy became more pronounced. Therefore, the United Nations should, as a priority, focus on development in order to attain its noble goal of international peace and security. A significant instrument in that regard was the operational activities for development, given their fundamental characteristics of neutrality and multilateralism. It was therefore of great concern to CARICOM that core resources for operational activities continued to decline. Non-core resources should supplement, not replace, core resources for development and they should be subjected to the same principles, rules and procedures as core resources.

15. Notwithstanding the professed concern for the needs of low-income countries, the developed countries with the capacity to meet the United Nations ODA target and the targets of the second United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries were, with a few notable exceptions, decreasing their contributions to core resources for operational activities. Developed countries should address the urgent situation of the poorest countries by meeting their commitments, and not by promoting a policy of exclusion. In that regard, CARICOM would like to reiterate its serious concern over the inadequate and distorted manner in which countries were assessed for concessional treatment. Such assessment should include qualitative data. Moreover, work on a vulnerability index should be completed.

16. CARICOM remained very concerned about the weakening of operational activities for development and the reorientation of UNDP to providing policy advice as opposed to small-scale projects. That did not augur well for the attainment of peace and security of developing countries and the world in general, given the strong linkage between peace and development. It was therefore necessary to strengthen the United Nations role in development through its operational activities for development by increasing the resources of UNDP to enable it to deliver on its commitments.

CARICOM also wished to highlight the importance of South-South cooperation.

17. While CARICOM hailed the achievements of UNIFEM, including in the area of gender equality, it recognized that much more remained to be done. It was a fact that women bore the brunt of the adverse effects of globalization, economic crises, or increased poverty. It was also a fact that women made up over half of the world's population. It went without saying that any economy, whether national or global, would be stronger if it developed the productive capacity of that majority sector of its society. Therefore, UNIFEM must be strengthened to assist countries in meeting the new challenges in a globalizing economy; it was necessary to provide it with adequate, stable and predictable resources. Bearing in mind the principle of capacity to pay, CARICOM urged Member States to make the strengthening of UNIFEM a priority and consider development activities in general as a contribution to poverty eradication, peace and security, development and growth, and as the most appropriate way of delivering on the commitments made at United Nations conferences and at the Millennium Summit.

18. **Mr. Cha Young-Cheol** (Republic of Korea) said that, as the interdependence of national economies had increased, so had the importance of strengthening the United Nations operational activities for development. The next triennial policy review would provide an excellent opportunity to reassess operational activities for development. In that regard, it was a matter of concern that ODA had been declining and that funding for United Nations operational activities for development had been stagnant since 1992. He therefore welcomed the international community's efforts to expand the core resource base for operational activities and also welcomed the results of the recent UNDP Ministerial Meeting aimed at securing development resources on a more stable basis.

19. Turning to technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) and South-South cooperation, he noted a significant increase over the past few years in interest in those forms of cooperation as a means of facilitating the integration of developing countries into the global economy. He welcomed the efforts of the UNDP Administrator to strengthen TCDC as part of his reform measures. South-South cooperation had become a central element of his Government's development cooperation policy. In February 2000, his Government, along with UNDP, had held a high-level forum on science and technology in Seoul to promote TCDC activities.

20. Taking note of the work of UNIFEM, he welcomed the fact that its core and non-core resources had increased. UNIFEM and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) should cooperate with each other in the implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in the elimination of gender-based violence and in promoting women's rights to ensure that they had fair and equal access to decision-making and had access to all the assets of society, including new information and communication technologies.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.